



Transformational Diplomacy: Question-and-Answer Session

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

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(11:40 a.m. EST)

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. I'd like to take a few questions now, if we can do that. Here, right here in front; this young man right there.

QUESTION: Thank you for coming, Madame Secretary. I just had a quick question for you. You stated, I believe a week ago, that you believe the African Union was dangerously under funded in their mission in Darfur. I was very encouraged and excited when you made some public comments asking for the money from Congress to support that African Union. I was then discouraged to find out that you never made a formal request to Congress. So I was wondering why you didn't make a formal request and if you can commit or will look into making a formal request to Congress for one of the early supplemental bills?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, in fact, I wrote letters to key members of Congress to try and to get the \$50 million and made phone calls to the same. And it is very important that we get that \$50 million and, yes, I think if there is a supplemental, which the Administration has not yet decided on, I'm quite certain that we will be asking for help for Sudan.

The United States has been very active on three fronts in Sudan. The first is that we have tried to deal with the humanitarian situation, to try and keep people from dying, to try to keep people from suffering. Andrew and his people at USAID have done a fine job in mobilizing nongovernmental organizations to do that. And so we've worked very hard on that front and we've had some success.

Secondly, we're working very hard on the diplomatic front because -- since we have, and it sometimes gets lost -- since we have the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the north and the south, ending a decades-old civil war in which millions of people died, we have potentially a model on which we can think about a resolution between the central government in Sudan and the Darfur region. And so we're working very hard on that in the Abuja talks.

Finally, as you mentioned, we've been very supportive of the African Union mission there. I personally went to NATO to suggest that NATO provide logistical and planning support. I think NATO will want to look at what more it might be able to do. The challenge now is that the African Union force, I think, has had great success in the places that it is able to deploy in diminishing the violence, but it faces two challenges. One is that it is a big territory. It's the size of Texas and so 7,000 forces can't cover the territory as a whole and we're going to have to find a way to enhance the capability, which is one reason that the United States is working with others for a UN peacekeeping mission to oversee or to help the African Union force.

The second problem is that west Darfur, western Darfur, has become more dangerous because of the situation in Chad and border crossings there. So we recognize the difficulties. We're trying very hard to accelerate our efforts on the security front, on the humanitarian front. Ultimately there has to be a political solution. But when I was out in Darfur several months ago, it's very clear that that political solution is really where we need to put more effort, because if these people are ever going to leave these camps they have to have a stable government to go home to.

QUESTION: I had the privilege of living in Russia for over eight years and I'm troubled at the prospects of Russia's democracy,

for example, with President Putin's removal of Russians' right to elect their own governors. And as a Russian expert, I was wondering what do you think is the future of Russian democracy and what should the U.S. role be in fostering that democracy?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, thank you for that very good question. Obviously, it is extremely important if we're going to have the kind of relationship that everybody had once envisioned with Russia; that is, one fully integrated into the international organizations, fully integrated into democratic institutions, that Russia return to a more democratic path than it is on now.

I want to be very clear. It isn't the Soviet Union. You know this place. This Russian Government is not the Soviet Government and sometimes people overstate this to say things have gone all the way back. They have not gone all the way back. And one of the issues is how to help ensure personal freedoms, how to help ensure that civil society can continue to operate, which was one reason that we were concerned about the NGO law that was just signed into law by President Putin.

I think our role is really twofold. First of all, to continue to try to work with those in Russia who from below are pressuring for a democratic path for Russia, and that means nongovernmental organizations, it means university people, it means all of the Russians who themselves want a more democratic future. The second part of this is to continue, though, to keep open for Russia a path toward a democratic West. I believe, for instance, that the work that we do in the Russia-NATO Council is very important, that it's a contact point. The work that we do in the OSCE is very important.

The G-8, where Russia holds the chair, I think it's extremely important that Russia understand that certain responsibilities come with -- and certain obligations and certain expectations -- with being the chair of an organization that is avowedly of industrialized democracies. And so if you're going to be a part of the G-8, you'd better be an industrialized democracy or people are going to have a lot of questions when they show up for the G-8 sessions.

So I think we can work on two courses. We can work to continue to stimulate change from within, working with Russian partners. It's for Russians to do. We can try and help. And secondly, I do think we have to keep open the links to a democratic West.

Let's see, right here.

QUESTION: Thank you, Secretary Rice. Raymond Tanter, Political Science and --

SECRETARY RICE: How are you, Ray? Good to see you.

QUESTION: Good to see you. Thank you, Madame Secretary.

Madame Secretary, congratulations on holding the Permanent Five members of the Security Council together on Iran. That's the good news. The bad news is that it seems as if Tehran is using negotiations as a means of continuing with enrichment or breaking the seals at Natanz, breaking the seals at Isfahan and violating the terms of its agreement with the European-3 concerning reprocessing. There's wild speculation about military action as a result of the fact that the diplomacy seems to be stymied. Meanwhile, you have a situation where the Iranian opposition, the Mujahedin-e Khalq, is on the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list of the Department, the Department of State, and I believe that these are the pro-democratic forces with which we should be working in the West.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. First of all, let me say I've known Professor Tanter for a long time. We go back to our early days as baby professors, which we won't say how long ago that was.

Iran is a very difficult problem. You're right, I think we have a good deal of coherence in the view of the major powers about the fact that Iran stepped over a line when it broke the seals and threatened to begin enrichment and reprocessing. Nobody wants Iran to have that capability.

The Iranians want to make this about their rights. This is not about their rights. It's about the ability of the international system to trust them with capabilities and technologies that could lead to a nuclear weapon. And they have a history with the IAEA of not disclosing, of covering their activities, and so no one does trust them with those technologies.

Now, in terms of the internal situation in Iran, we've always said that this is not just an issue for us of the nuclear program, although that is its most dangerous manifestation, but this is also a state sponsor of terror, it's a state that is supportive of Hezbollah which causes difficulties in Lebanon, of Palestinian rejectionists which make it hard for Abu Mazen to seek the two state solution with Israel that he seeks. And of course Iran, unlike so many countries in the region, has been going backwards in

terms of its development at home. This is a place that is -- where you have a population which is outward looking, which wants to be a part of the international system, which wants democracy and reform, and where the unelected mullahs have done nothing but take more and more power away from the marginally elected institutions that exist in Iran.

Now, I won't even speak to the language of the current Iranian President. I mean Ahmedi-Nejad has given us all a focal point to say if everyone thought that this -- if anyone ever thought that this was a state that was behaving in a normal fashion, his statements are so out of bounds I think that has taken that veneer away.

The question is then: How do you make it possible for there to be change in Iran? And we are trying to work with, through -- Congress has made available some funding that we are trying to work, to the degree we can, with nongovernmental organizations. We try to broadcast in Iran. Iranians go back and forth. This is not a population that is closed off to information.

But we do have a problem with MEK. It is a terrorist organization. It has -- was engaged in killings which actually ended up in the deaths even of Americans. That situation has not changed. But we do hope that by standing with the Iranian people, by making clear that the United States believes that the Iranian people deserve a better future and deserve an elected future, that the international community can begin to rally around that cause, because Iran is simply 180 degrees out of step with the rest of the trends in the Middle East.

Right here, in the green sweater. This young lady right here.

QUESTION: Thank you. I'm a senior in the School of Foreign Service and I really enjoyed your comments. In fact, I was thinking of going to the bookstore and getting the study guide for the Foreign Service Exam.

SECRETARY RICE: Good. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: I was really happy hearing your speech. When you were talking about transformational diplomacy, that means that the United States has to work in partnership with countries, working with people, not for people. Then, toward the end of your speech, I noticed you were talking about right and wrong. And I was wondering, when we're engaging international actors, saying that they're wrong, how is that a true partnership?

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. Well, you do have to work with people and we particularly have good working relationships with people who share our values. We have a whole host of countries around the world who are committed to the democratic enterprise, who do believe that the governed ought to have to give their consent, that you don't just rule by decree, who do believe in women's rights -- all of the things that I think are core truths.

But you have to be willing to say that they're core truths. It is simply never right that women are subservient. It's simply never right that people have no say in who will govern them. It's simply never right that people have no freedom to worship as a matter of conscience, or not to worship at all. If you're relativist about right and wrong, then you can't lead.

Now, you can have policy differences about how best to extend women's rights in the Middle East. You can have policy differences about how best to support democracy in Russia. Those are policy differences. But if America, of all places, doesn't speak for those who are oppressed, if America doesn't speak for the basic human dignities that come with democracy, if America doesn't speak for what the President has called the non-negotiable demands of human dignity, no one will. Throughout the period of the Cold War, I remember how much people in Eastern Europe just wanted to get their hands on something American or somehow wanted to be able to hear Voice of America because Voice of America told the truth or Radio Free Europe or Radio Free Liberty because they told the truth. And after the Cold War, as the Cold War was winding down and you would talk to people, even people who had been a part of the power structure in the Soviet Union or in Eastern Europe, they would say to you, you know, we waited to make sure that somebody was listening. We wanted not to be abandoned to the dark corners where nobody cared. And so you have to speak with a clarity about what is right and what is wrong. And when you speak with that clarity, I think people do rally to that.

You know, I said to my European friends on many occasions and we've had a hard time in Iraq. It's hard. It's really difficult. It's difficult for people who solved their differences, their entire existence by fighting and by coercion and by repression and by violence. It's really hard for them to find a way to resolve their differences by politics instead and by compromise. It's really hard in Afghanistan where you still have terrorists who will blow up innocent children at a moment's notice. It's really hard to go to a place like Jordan -- I see the Ambassador here -- and see this hotel where this wedding party, of all things, was blown up by a suicide bomber. It's hard to see the difficulties that the Palestinian people live with every day. It's really hard. But it's been hard before for countries that made it.

And you know, if people had given up on Europe in 1942, we wouldn't be standing here today talking about a community of democratic states in Europe. If people had given up on Japan, we would not be standing here today talking about sharing democratic values with Japan. So we've done this before. And it's only when you lose will or you lose your sense of what is right, that you lose the capacity to have the kind of optimism in the face of the difficulties and the dangers that lead our forefathers to deliver Europe, Japan and places like that to a democratic future. And we now with them, with Europe, with Japan, with others, owe that same kind of commitment to people who are still struggling.

QUESTION: Thank you very much for coming in. Your program of transformational diplomacy sounds like it could be very fruitful. And I had an obstacle in mind that I thought maybe you could address. In the fall of 2002, the European Union brought a suit, a lawsuit that was very detailed to the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District in New York, where they accused the U.S. tobacco company of sanctions-busting in Iraq, which brought millions of dollars into the same family, and also of having money-laundering and so forth with various terrorist organizations and with organized crime in South America and in the Baltics.

And the judges decided, in the following spring, that this case could be prosecuted under U.S. legislation, including the Patriot Act. However, they will not do so because to do so would be to decide U.S. foreign policy and they had no indication from Congress or from the Administration that it was in the interest of U.S. foreign policy to do so.

And I was wondering if you thought that, perhaps now, it would be in the interest of U.S. foreign policy to convict U.S. corporations that violate such legislation abroad? Thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I can assure you that we don't stand in the way of federal prosecutions of American entities. We don't do that. It is our -- we have, as you know, a system of an independent judiciary and an independent executive branch. And in fact, I stay very far away from anything that the independent judiciary is doing.

I want to speak for a second on something that you mentioned, though, that takes it in a slightly different direction, which is the situation with Saddam Hussein and the sanctions-busting that took place in the oil-for-food and so forth. There, I do think that we learned a very important lesson, which is that if you're going to have a sanctions regime of that kind, that you really need not just controls on it, but oversight of it.

And one of the problems that happened with the oil-for-food program is that there was really insufficient authority, insufficient centering of responsibility for what was going on with that program. I think everybody would agree with that and that's how we had the situation that we did. It is one reason that we are so focused on the need for reform in the United Nations. You may have heard about the debate that is going on on reform in the United Nations and something like the oil-for-food shows that unless you have responsible authority -- and in defense of the Secretariat, it has not had the kind of authority that it needs to really manage the affairs of the United Nations.

This and budgetary responsibility and the capability to really use assets well is why we've had the kind of reform effort that we had there. And I think that the oil-for-food scandal showed how difficult it is to manage a regime of that kind, but it also said that if you're going to do something like that, you have to have really tough controls on it and somebody has to be in charge.

Others? Let's see, I'm looking for -- young lady right back there. Okay, I'm told you're going to get the last question. She's coming that way.

QUESTION: Ma'am, I'm an active duty military officer as well as being a graduate student here at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. And so, I've actually had the experience of working out in Afghanistan with the State Department and it obviously is very important, we've discovered, to have that link between the military and the State Department.

However, often, our soldiers and our diplomats are operating under different rule sets in different chains-of-command and I was wondering how that would be addressed and also, how you address the tour length so that -- you know, when a soldier or unit is coming through and they're working, will they have the same person to work through with the State Department?

SECRETARY RICE: Yes, thank you. First of all, thank you for your service to our country and yes, I think the way that we've addressed it -- and you're right; there are separate chains-of-command and there are going to continue to be separate chains-of-command, because the military reports up through the Secretary of Defense to the President in the national command authority and the diplomatic corps reports through me to the President on the other side.

But what we found is that we need absolute fusion of our processes in the field, I think both with General Eikenberry and Ambassador Neumann in Afghanistan and before them, General Barno and Zal Khalilzad and now, Zal Khalilzad and General Casey in Iraq. What we've done is to see a very great fusion at the center. Those -- the ambassador in Iraq or Afghanistan, the three-star in charge in Afghanistan or Iraq see each other all the time, meet all the time, their staffs are always together. I don't think there is much danger of any distance between them.

As you go down through the chain, however, I think that's where we need to start to achieve better integration and it's one reason that I noticed -- made the note about the POLADS, that it is -- it's been that those were essentially positions out of -- with a four-star someplace in the world, when really, you want to see political-military integration further and further down the chain. I think another thing that we could really do is, so to speak, more cross-training.

We were talking -- I was talking with some people yesterday about the Foreign Service Institute and more work with the National Defense University and with the war colleges, because the continuum between ending conflict, stabilizing a country, and then moving it on to independence is something that we have to be better at doing and it requires integration of all of our assets, but it also requires integration of our people with the host country, so it's a very complex effort. And I think we will see more of it.

You know, again, it's -- we've done this before. If you look back at World War II, you'll find that American military and American diplomats worked very, very closely together in the reconstruction of Germany and in getting Germany on its feet. You'll find that they worked very closely in Asia and Japan on the reconstruction. So, it is, again, work that we've done before.

We, in a sense, lost our muscle tone to do it during the long period of the Cold War, when the international system was "stable" in a way that I think required less of this kind of work. But that began to change with the Balkans in the 1990s. It certainly changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union and then with the Balkans in the 1990s and then it began to change even more rapidly as change has been coming to the Middle East.

So I believe that this is something that we will do and we will do well and we have to do it well, because the fact of the matter is that when people say, "Oh, this is hard," and "Can you imagine a better world," or "Why do you think there might be a better world," or "Why do you put so much faith in democracy and so much hope in this particular outcome?" I really want to say to them, "Do you have a better idea? Do you have an alternative? Do you have an alternative to well-governed, democratic states that are responsible in the international system?"

We've seen the alternative; the alternative in Afghanistan that isn't governed at all and where al-Qaida runs wild. We've seen the alternative in Sudan where we see the butchering of people that takes place. We've seen the alternative and we don't like that. And so like our predecessors did in World War II, we have to focus all of our energies on making this happen. And I just want to close by saying in 1989 I was lucky enough to be here. As President DeGoia said, I was the Soviet specialist at the end of the Cold War in the White House. It really doesn't get much better than that.

And I got to participate in the liberation of Eastern Europe and the unification of Germany and eventually the peaceful breakup of the Soviet Union itself. But in fact, people like me were just harvesting good decisions that had been taken in 1946 and 1947 and 1948 because if you look back in the postwar period, it didn't look very easy. In 1946 and 1947, Germans were still starving in Europe. In 1946 communists won big minorities in Italy and in France. And in 1947, there was civil war in Greece. There was civil conflict in Turkey. In 1948, Czechoslovakia fell to a communist coupe. Germany was permanently divided in Berlin and in 1949, the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear weapon five years ahead of schedule and the Chinese communists won.

This wasn't just a kind of minor setback for a democracy. These were huge strategic setbacks. And so when I walk into my office, the other portraits that I look at in addition to Jefferson, the portraits of George Marshall, but especially Dean Acheson because how out of all of that chaos at the end of World War II did they think to construct a collective security organization called NATO, did they think to press for democracy in Germany and Japan, did they stay so true to their values that they understood that Europe had always had temporary solutions to its problems. For more than 150 years, France and Germany, everybody wanted them to stop fighting, but they didn't do it.

And finally, with democratic values enshrined in Germany and a democratic institution like NATO organized in Europe, nobody can imagine Germany and France fighting again today. And so we've done it before. We can do it. And one day people are going to look back, somebody's going to be serving in the White House and they'll look back and they'll say, you know, I'm really glad that America stayed committed to those values. I'm really glad that America worked with its partners around the world to promote those values because there's a peaceful and prosperous and democratic Middle East and the world is forever changed.

Thank you. (Applause.)

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